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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

**APPLICANT:** Gellman *et al.* **ART UNIT:** 3731  
**SERIAL NO.:** 09/939,114 **EXAMINER:** Pantuck, B.  
**FILED:** August 24, 2001 **CONFIRMATION NO.:** 3367  
**TITLE:** Forward Deploying Suturing Device and Methods of Use

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

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TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE

This paper is submitted in response to an Office action, Paper No. 7, mailed from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 13, 2003.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the following amendments, reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection and objection, and passage of the claims to allowance.

Please amend the application, without prejudice, and consider the following remarks. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, a marked-up version of the amendments is attached at the end of this Amendment and Response.

In the Abstract:

Please amend the Abstract to read as follows:

The present invention allows for the performance of surgical procedures that involve the passing of sutures through tissue in a location that is facilitated by the suturing instrument deploying the suture in a forward-facing direction in relation to the suturing instrument. In addition, this invention provides for the catching and retrieval of the suture after it is passed through the tissue. In particular, this suturing instrument may be placed or positioned in the body such that a suture may be passed into a tissue of the body while the face of the distal end of the instrument abuts the tissue.

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